

C1 (cont)
hook material which includes a base sheet attached to one of said elastic ear tabs and stemlike projections extending from said base sheet, said stemlike projections of said mechanical fastener being releasably engaged with said one elastic ear tab [disposable absorbent article] to protect said hook material of said mechanical fastener before said disposable absorbent article is handled by a user.

Please cancel claims 36-42.

C2 Sub D2 E
 43. (Once Amended) The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 36 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said one elastic ear tab [disposable absorbent article] to provide a peel strength of at least about 20 grams.

44. (Once Amended) The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 36 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said one elastic ear tab [disposable absorbent article] to provide a peel strength of from about 30 to about 90 grams.

Please cancel claims 45-47 and 49.

C3
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 50. (Once Amended) The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 48 wherein said mechanical fastener further comprises a loop material which is attached to said outer cover of said disposable absorbent article and wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said loop material to protect said stemlike projections and provide said pant-like structure.

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 51. (Once Amended) The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 48 wherein said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said outer cover of said disposable absorbent article to protect said stemlike projections and provide said pant-like structure.

Please add the following new claims:

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52. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 48 wherein said base sheet of said hook material is attached to a rear periphery of said absorbent article and said stemlike projections of said hook material are releasably engaged with an outer surface of said absorbent article near a front edge of said absorbent article to protect said hook material and provide said pant-like structure.

C4
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53. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 48 wherein said base sheet of said hook material is attached to a front periphery of said absorbent article and said stemlike projections of said hook material are releasably engaged with an outer surface of said absorbent article near a rear edge of said absorbent article to protect said hook material and provide said pant-like structure.

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54. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 50 wherein said base sheet of said hook material is attached to a rear periphery of said absorbent article and said loop material is attached to said outer cover near a front edge of said absorbent article.

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55. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 50 wherein said base sheet of said hook material is attached to a front periphery of said absorbent article and said loop material is attached to said outer cover near a rear edge of said absorbent article.

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56. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 51 wherein said base sheet of said hook material is attached to a rear periphery of said absorbent article and said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said outer cover near a front edge of said absorbent article.

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57. The package of disposable absorbent articles according to claim 51 wherein said base sheet of said hook material is attached to a front periphery of said absorbent article and said stemlike projections are releasably engaged with said outer cover near a rear edge of said absorbent article.